

REMARKS

The applicants have carefully reviewed the official action mailed on August 24, 2004, and the references cited therein. In the official action, claims 1, 2, 7-11, 15, 28, and 29 were rejected as anticipated by Allen (U.S. Patent No. 5,899,303) and claims 4-6 were rejected as unpatentable over Allen in view of Clark (U.S. Patent No. 2,878,532).

By way of this response, claims 1, 2, 15, and 28 have been amended. Claims 1, 2, 4-11, 15, 28, and 29 remain pending and at issue, with claims 1, 15, and 28 being independent. In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, the applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this application.

As an initial matter, the applicants have amended the abstract to correct a minor typographical error therein. The applicants believe the amended abstract obviates the related objection in the official action and respectfully request withdrawal of that objection.

Turning to the art rejections, independent claim 1 is directed to a door including a first door panel having a surface that faces a doorway and that is adapted to laterally translate relative to the doorway between a doorway blocking position and an unblocking position. The door includes a first seal including a first sealing surface interposed between a first attachment end and a first distal end with the first attachment end being attached to the surface of the first door panel so that the first sealing surface faces the surface of the door panel that faces the doorway. A second seal is disposed to allow relative movement between the first seal and the second seal, and the second seal includes a second sealing surface interposed between a second attachment end and a second distal end, such that the first door panel in a doorway blocking position causes the first sealing surface to face the second sealing surface

and positions the second distal end between the first distal end and at least one of the first door panel and the first attachment end.

While Allen generally teaches the use of seals in connection with translating door panels, Allen fails to disclose the seal and door panel configuration recited in claim 1. In particular, among other deficiencies, Allen fails to disclose a seal including a first sealing surface interposed between a first attachment end and a first distal end with the first attachment end attached to a surface of a door panel that faces a doorway opening so that the first sealing surface faces the surface of the door panel. On the contrary, the examples referenced in the official action (i.e., FIGS. 10A, 10B, 12A, and 12B of Allen) illustrate seals having sealing surfaces configured to be perpendicular to a doorway rather than facing a surface of a door panel that faces a doorway as recited in claim 1.

For purposes of illustrating the above-noted deficiency of Allen and with reference to FIG. 12A from Allen (below), the surfaces of the seals 124 and 126 that engage or contact one another (i.e., the sealing surfaces indicated by the arrow A) are perpendicular to the doorway or opening across which the doors 108 and 110 translate.

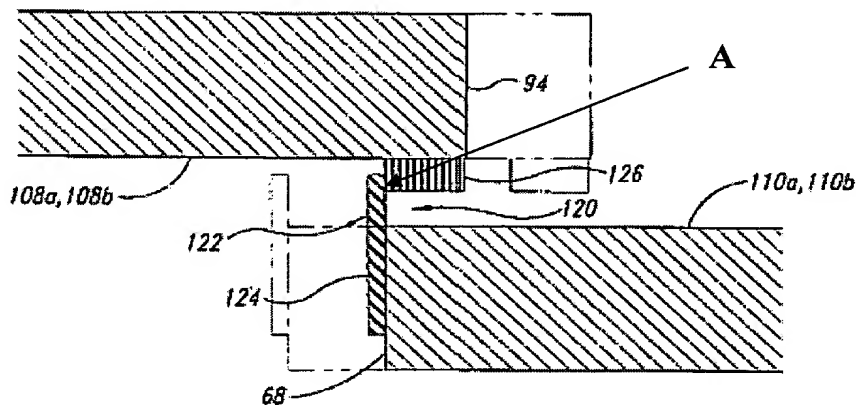


Fig. 12A

In contrast to the structures disclosed by Allen in FIGS. 10A, 10B, 12A, and 12B, a portion of FIG. 11A from the instant application is provided below as an example embodiment of the apparatus recited in claim 1. As depicted in the example of FIG. 11A, a seal 50 provides a sealing surface B facing a surface C of a door panel 16, where the surface C of the door panel 16 faces a doorway 10.

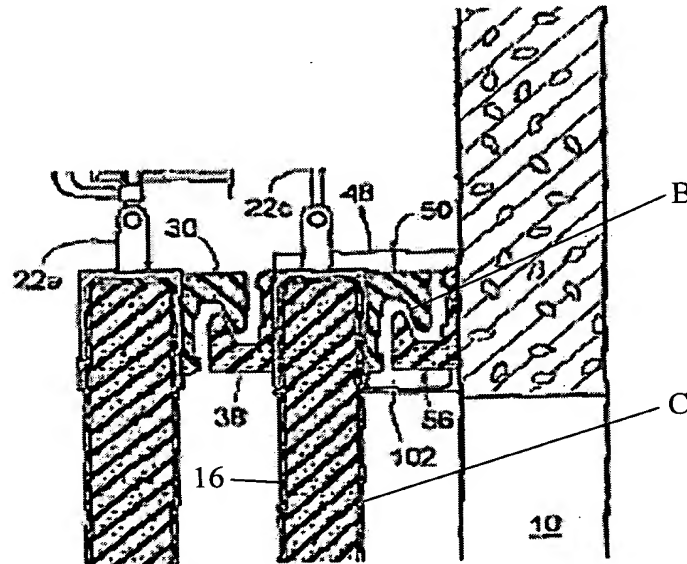


Fig. 11A

Thus, as is clear from the foregoing, Allen fails to disclose at least the seal configuration recited in claim 1 and, thus, fails to disclose every limitation recited in claim 1. As a result, Allen fails to anticipate the apparatus recited in claim 1. Accordingly, the applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the anticipation rejection of claim 1 based on Allen and submit that claim 1 and claims 2 and 4-11 dependent thereon are now in condition for allowance.

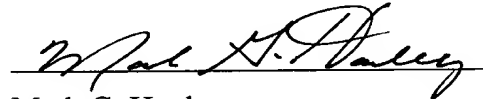
The remaining independent claims 15 and 28 are allowable for at least the reasons set forth above in connection with claim 1. Accordingly, claims 15, 28 and 29 are also in condition for allowance.

Conclusion

For at least the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the pending claims are in condition for allowance. If, for any reason, the examiner is unable to allow the application in the next official action, the examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiency in the amount enclosed or any additional fees which may be required during the pendency of this application under 37 CFR 1.16 or 1.17 to Deposit Account No. 50-2455.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Mark G. Hanley", is written over a horizontal line.

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